

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY NEWS

A Publication of the Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program
December, 2006



GROWING THE WILDLIFE DIVERSITY PROGRAM

Progress sometimes seems slow, but DNR's Wildlife Diversity Program (WDP) will take whatever growth we can get. After years of looking after the statewide needs of more than 500 nongame wildlife species with a staff of only four, I'm happy to announce the addition of Karen Kinkead, PhD, to our program. Formerly employed at Iowa State University, Karen will now direct the inventory, monitoring and research end of the WDP and also brings much-needed expertise with herptiles. She will also coordinate our partnering research projects with Iowa State University and other institutions or agencies and will lead efforts to select research grant proposals seeking WDP funding (see following article).

While our permanent staff is still small, we also welcome Ron Moore to the team. Ron will be working with the WDP this next year, through the AmeriCorps Program. DNR has employed many AmeriCorps personnel in recent years, but this is the first time we've brought one into service with the WDP. Ron worked as a field assistant to Karen earlier this year, helping conduct some preliminary wildlife inventory work, so he should slip seamlessly into the WDP where he will continue to assist Karen and other staff.

This program growth is necessary in order to help implement the Iowa Wildlife Action Plan and to assure that State Wildlife Grant funding (or more permanent sources) will continue to flow from Congress. It has been made easier with new program income from sale of Iowa's natural resource license plates, which now help fund Wildlife Diversity as well as the popular Resource Enhancement And Protection (REAP) program. We wish to thank all of you who continue to purchase or renew these specialty plates, as much of this income can be leveraged into further WDP funding. This is increasingly important, especially as revenues from the "Chickadee Checkoff" continue to decline (see later article in this issue).

As we gain staff and funding, the WDP's overall direction is changing. We continue working with selected restoration species such as Osprey, Peregrine Falcons and Trumpeter Swans, but we can no longer afford to focus funding on a few showy species while neglecting hundreds of lesser-known animals in Iowa. Our priorities now must be inventorying and monitoring all of Iowa's wildlife, and helping managers of both public and private lands better provide for the habitat needs of all species. Thus, we're turning attention to landscapes and wildlife populations, rather than habitat remnants and individual creatures. This may not have the "breathtaking" quality of seeing more eagles and otters in the wild, but it will better serve the needs of real wildlife diversity. After all, that's why our program is called what it is.

--Doug Harr

INTRODUCING KAREN KINKEAD

Hello, I am the newest permanent addition to the Wildlife Diversity Program, in the position of Research and Monitoring Biologist. My responsibilities include overseeing the soon-to-be statewide Multiple Species Inventory and Monitoring (MISM) Program and coordinating on-going and potential research projects that concern the species of greatest conservation need as listed in Iowa's Wildlife Action Plan. I am a research biologist by training, with a B.S. degree from Virginia Tech and both an M.S. degree and a

Ph.D. from Clemson University in South Carolina. My M.S. project concerned small mammals, while the Ph.D. dissertation involved amphibian responses to wetland restoration.

I have been in Iowa since 2004, working on a statewide monitoring plan. During the summer of 2005, I coordinated a team of volunteers to test the monitoring protocols at Snyder Farm, owned and operated by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. The Iowa DNR Landowner Incentive Program, supplemented with funds from the Wildlife Diversity Program, had funding in 2006 to hire four temporary technicians and deploy the protocols on 14 sites, primarily in Lucas County. The data collected from this field season is still being analyzed.

Doug asked that I mention my plans for working in Iowa. I would like to establish permanent sampling locations in each county for the monitoring program. I would also like to see at least one research project funded by the DNR on-going in each management unit. Obviously, both of those are very big goals that will take staff and monetary resources we currently do not have. We would need to hire people, both through the IDNR and through other agencies and non-governmental organizations for the monitoring, and through universities or other groups for the research projects. To hire more people within the natural resources field means we need to find more funding, and it is most important that this be permanent, stabilized funding.

It is a good time to be in Iowa. There is a lot of potential just beginning to gain momentum. With the Sustainable Funding Initiative, of which the WDP would receive only a small portion, we could implement statewide wildlife monitoring and establish research projects on many different species in many different locations in Iowa. We could gain critical knowledge of the species of greatest conservation need while providing temporary, entry level jobs to numerous recent graduates and those earning degrees within the natural resources field. Thanks and I look forward to working with you.

--Karen Kinkead



OSPREY SUCCESS IN 2006

This summer there were six nesting Osprey pairs reported and four successful nesting pairs fledged eight young. A total of ten Ospreys came to Iowa from Minnesota and fifteen more were relocated from Wisconsin. There were three rehabilitated Ospreys placed at White Rock Conservancy near Coon Rapids. Coordinators at each site are always willing to assist new volunteers for those wishing to engage this exciting work.

- At Lake Macbride, Jodeane Cancilla from Macbride Raptor Project reported two nesting pairs and one was successful. Adults J7 (Hartman 2003) and K8 (Hartman 2002) fledged two young.
- At Hartman Reserve Nature Center, Sandy Fulcher reported a wild nesting pair fledged two young. Male is H8 from 2001 release and female is unbanded.
- At Jester Park, Joe Boyles with Polk CCB reported a pair E1 (Macbride 2000) and E4 (Hartman 2000) fledged two young.
- At Don Williams, Emily Herring with Boone CCB and volunteers reported a wild nesting pair fledged two young. However, one young was later discovered dead at nest site. Necropsy revealed that it was not attributed to West Nile virus. Five additional Ospreys were relocated from Minnesota.
- At Linn County's site at Wickiup Hill, Chuck Ungs with Linn CCB and volunteers released five additional Ospreys from Wisconsin. A wild nesting pair appeared to be incubating but no chicks hatched.

- At Clear Lake Nelson Crabb, Ron Andrews with DNR Wildlife, and volunteers placed five additional Ospreys from Minnesota. However two young did not survive hacking process.
- At Red Rock Reservoir Marla Mertz with Marion CCB, Larry Zirkleback with DNR Parks, John Mertz and Jason Sandholdt with DNR Law Enforcement, and volunteers released five Ospreys from Wisconsin.
- A new site was established at White Rock Conservancy where five Wisconsin Ospreys were hacked by Kay Neumann with Saving Our Avian Resources (SOAR) and volunteers. Three rehabbed birds from The Raptor Center, St. Paul, MN. were also released.

It is appropriate to note that each of the earliest release sites have nesting Ospreys. It is hopeful that surviving birds from the 100 Ospreys released or produced since 2003 will bolster these pioneering pairs. Since 1997 157 Ospreys have been released at eight sites. From 2003 – 2005 four nests had produced eight young. In 2006 four successful nests produced eight young. There have been sixteen wild Ospreys produced in Iowa.

--Pat Schlarbaum

2006 IOWA ENDANGERED/THREATENED RAPTOR REPORT

Peregrine Falcon: It appears that Iowa nesting peregrine numbers are holding steady. Like 2005, there were ten confirmed peregrine territories. From these there were at least five successful nests that produced a total of at least 11 fledged young. There was an active territory in each of the following locations: Des Moines (Polk Co.), Cedar Rapids (Linn Co.), Lansing (Allamakee Co.), Waukon Jct. (Allamakee Co.), Bettendorf (Scott Co.), the Louisa Generating Station (Louisa Co.), Burlington (Des Moines Co.), and Chillicothe (Wapello Co.). Davenport (Scott Co.) had two active territories. Seven of the ten territories were along the Mississippi River (where most historic nesting took place), with three of these territories focused on Mississippi River bridges. Both Mississippi River bluff nests in Allamakee Co. were unsuccessful this year, and there continues to be concern with improving nest success at these cliff-sites.

Bald Eagle: While the rate of increasing eagle nests in Iowa is slowing, eagle population expansion continues. Six additional counties (O'Brien, Wapello, Page, Boone, Franklin, and Dickinson) reported first time eagle nesting this year – bringing the total number of counties with eagle nests to 77 (out of 99 potentially). Since DNR staff no longer have resources to monitor all bald eagle nesting, a conservative estimate (based on reports including at least 20 new nests) indicated that there were at least 200 active eagle nests in Iowa in 2006. Just 10 years ago (in 1996) there were 54 active nests in only 20 Iowa counties. If the current rate of nesting increase continues, Iowa could have a bald eagle nest in each of its 99 counties within 5 nesting years.

Barn Owl: It appears that recent mild winters are increasing barn owl survival and proving beneficial to Iowa nesting barn owls. After a ten-year high of seven confirmed nests in 2005, 2006 was an even better nesting year with eight nesting barn owl pairs –one nest each for the following eight counties: Sac, Woodbury, Montgomery, Lucas, Clarke, Guthrie, Page, and Wayne. A total of at least 14 young were produced at those nests. Surprisingly, nests were not reported for Taylor and Tama counties, which have been very productive barn owl nesting counties during the last decade. Because barn owls do not survive harsh winters well, this might be one of the few species for which global warming proves beneficial – especially here at the northern edge of its range!

--Bruce Ehresman



Refund for Wildlife

The Iowa DNR Nongame program needs your help! Tax season is soon upon us and with the drudgery comes an opportunity to do some good for wildlife. The “Fish/Wildlife Fund” Check-off (Chickadee Check-off) is a main funding source for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources’ Wildlife Diversity Program.



The Wildlife Diversity program has always depended on the generosity of Iowa’s citizens to fund success stories such as the restoration of ospreys, peregrine falcons, and trumpeter swans to the state. Donations received also fund research, land management for nongame species and numerous fun and educational outdoor events like Bald Eagle Days, the Prairie Chicken Festival and HawkWatch Weekend, which could not be done without the yearly donations to the fish and wildlife fund.

Currently Iowa’s 500 + non-game species are benefiting from the contributions of a few. Research of the Fish/Wildlife Fund (Chickadee Check-off) shows an average \$11.73 contribution from less than 1% (approx.) of the population filing income tax. This provides under \$117,000 in revenue which is down almost 12% from last year and 20% from 2 years ago. For the wildlife diversity program this does not match the level of management needed across Iowa. With 45% of Iowa’s population over age 16 engaging in wildlife watching activities, there is much funding potential to realize.

Every penny of each donation goes to the Wildlife Diversity Program and the check-off is one of the most hassle-free ways of making a donation to benefit Iowa’s Natural Resources. Please make a contribution to the quality of life in Iowa by donating part or all of your refund to the “Fish/Wildlife Fund” this year. And pass the word!

If you would like additional information about the Fish/Wildlife Fund, please contact Stephanie Shepherd, Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Technician at 515-432-2823 ext. 102 or stephanie.shepherd@dnr.state.ia.us.

On behalf of Iowa’s great outdoors – Thank you!



TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE

The Wildlife Diversity program would like to send out a warm welcome and a big thank you to the 151 organizations and businesses that have joined Iowa’s Teaming With Wildlife Coalition. Teaming With Wildlife is a group working towards better and more sustainable funding for wildlife conservation, education and recreation in the state of Iowa and across the United States. Organizations who have heeded the call to join the coalition of supporters include county conservation boards, chambers of commerce, tourism boards, hunting groups, as well as traditional conservation groups. Together we will make a difference for wildlife!

If your organization or business is interested in joining the coalition or if you would like more information please contact Stephanie Shepherd at 515-432-2823 or stephanie.shepherd@dnr.state.ia.us. More information on the national coalition can be found at www.teaming.com.

Announcing the New (Sort of!) Volunteer Wildlife Monitoring Program



The Wildlife Diversity Program has a new way to get involved with some long-running surveys. In 2003 we teamed up with Iowa NatureMapping to create trainings for NatureMappers who were interested in becoming involved with more detailed data collection on Iowa's frogs and toads or nesting raptors and colonial waterbirds. This program had a rocky start with many technical problems with the online database, but the database is back online, the program has got a new name, and workshops have started being scheduled for late winter and spring 2007.

The Volunteer Wildlife Monitoring Program (VWMP) is a 5 hour training designed to prepare folks to collect yearly data on Iowa's declining wildlife and submit that data to the wildlife diversity program. These data in turn give the understaffed diversity program a way of monitoring population trends for Iowa's frogs and toads and the nesting success of Iowa's raptor and colonial waterbird species.

VWMP has two primary surveys: 1) Frog and Toad Call Survey and 2) Bird Nest Monitoring. At a Frog and Toad call survey workshop you will learn how to identify Iowa's frog and toad species by sight and sound, how to locate survey sites, and how to collect and submit data from these sites. The Bird Nest Monitoring workshops will focus on identification techniques for raptors and colonial waterbirds and their nests and will prepare the surveyor for observing nest activity and determining the number of young produced. Trainings will be open to all adults (not just Naturemappers) and anyone with an enthusiasm for wildlife is encouraged to attend!

Pre-registration is required with a small fee to cover lunch which will be provided. Training workshops run from 10am-4pm and have been scheduled on the following dates and locations:

Frog and Toad Survey Training

February 17, 2007 Mahaska County Conservation Board Nature Center at Russell Wildlife Area (Near Oskaloosa). Fee is \$6.00 Contact: Pete Eyheralde, 641-673-9327 or pete@mahasakcounty.org

March 3, 2007 Atlantic Public Library, 507 Poplar St. Atlantic, IA 50022 Fee is \$6.00 Contact: Stephanie Shepherd, 515-432-2823 or stephanie.shepherd@dnr.state.ia.us

March 10, 2007 Cerro Gordo County Conservation Board, Lime Creek Nature Center Near Mason City, IA. Fee is \$5.50. Contact: Stephanie Shepherd, 515-432-2823 or stephanie.shepherd@dnr.state.ia.us

Bird Nest Monitoring

TBA – Workshops will be scheduled in the months of March and April.

If you love being in the outdoors and observing wildlife and would like to make a significant contribution to the conservation of these species than come join us at a training! If none of the above dates or locations works for you, keep checking our website at <http://www.iowadnr.com/wildlife/files/divers.html> as more dates will be added to the schedule.

If you would like more information about the Volunteer Wildlife Monitoring Program or would like to know how to register for a workshop please contact: Stephanie Shepherd, 515-432-2823, stephanie.shepherd@dnr.state.ia.us.

--Stephanie Shepherd

2007 Bald Eagle Appreciation Days Events

Quad Cities Bald Eagle Days

Saturday and Sunday, January 6-7

QCCA Expo Center, 2621 4th Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois

Hours: 10:00a.m.-7:00p.m. Saturday, 10:00a.m.-5:00p.m. Sunday

- Live Eagle & Bird of Prey Programs by The World Bird Sanctuary
- Special Attractions! Clyde Peeling's Reptiles and Gen Ebert Mammals of Wisconsin.
- Wildlife Art Show & Sale and Environmental Fair
- For more information contact the Mississippi River Visitor Center 309-794-5338 or Arlynn Hartwig 309-788-2543

Mississippi River Visitor Center

January 13 - February 18, Weekends Only

- Combination eagle watches and clock tower tours
- Saturday and Sunday times are: 9:30, 1:00, 3:00
- Reservations required. Group size is limited. Call 309-794-5338

Clinton Bald Eagle Watch

Saturday, January 6

- Outdoor viewing: Lock & Dam 13, 8:00-4:00
- Live Bird Programs and Storytelling: Clinton Community College, 10:30-2:00
- Exhibits: Clinton Community College from 9:00 - 3:30
- Free bus service from college to the outdoor viewing area.
- For more information call: 815-259-3628

Dubuque Bald Eagle Watch

Saturday, January 13

- Outdoor viewing south of Lock and Dam 11 at A.Y. McDonald Park from 9:00-4:00
- Live Eagle Programs by the University of MN Raptor Center at 9:30, 12:30 & 3:00
- Indoor Exhibits from 9:00 - 4:30 at the Grand River Center - Port of Dubuque
- For more information call: 563-556-4372

Muscatine Bald Eagle Watch

Saturday, January 13

- Outdoor viewing from 9:00 to 1:00 at Riverside Park & Lock and Dam 16
- Live Eagle programs at 9:30 & 11:00 at Riverside Park
- For more information call: 563-263-7913

Guttenberg Eagle Watch

Saturday and Sunday, January 13-14

- Indoor programs at Naturally Guttenberg, 323 S. River Park Drive
- Outdoor viewing at selected sites
- For more information call: 1-8776-252-2323

Keokuk Bald Eagle Days

Saturday and Sunday, January 20-21

- Indoor programs and Environmental Fair at the River City Mall, Keokuk, Iowa
- Live Eagle Programs Saturday 9:00-3:00 and Sunday 10:00-3:00
- Outdoor viewing along the River Front
- For more information call: 1-800-383-1219

Saturday and Sunday, January 27-28

- ## Quincy Bald Eagle Watch

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The Wildlife Diversity Team is:

Doug Harr, Program Coordinator for administration, planning & funding
(resource background: birds & habitat management)

Bruce Ehresman, Program Biologist for projects & technical guidance
(resource background: birds & habitat management)

Karen Kinkad, PhD, Monitoring and Research Biologist
(resource background: herptiles & small mammals)

Pat Schlarbaum, Program Technician for species restoration & public events
(resource background: birds & public relations)

Stephanie Shepherd, Program Technician for data management, funding support & field research
(resource background: butterflies & restoration ecology)

Ron Moore, AmeriCorps Wildlife Specialist
(resource background: fish & herptiles)



(Left to right) Pat Schlarbaum, Karen Kinkad,
Doug Harr, Bruce Ehresman, Stephanie Shepherd
(not pictured—Ron Moore)

With Assistance From:

Ron Andrew, Wildlife Biologist (Trumpeter Swans & furbearers)

Dave Hoffman, Natural Resources Technician (Trumpeter Swans & furbearers)

Federal regulations prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, as described above, or if you desire information, please write to Director, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, 900 East Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50319-0034.

